

that at \$50,000 your premium costs 20 percent of your income—we changed it so that an individual would not pay more than 9.69 percent of their income toward the premium.

This is one example of how we could improve current law and, I believe, take away one of the biggest criticisms and fix it rather easily.

Here is another problem. I wish to share a story from Monica of Ocean-side, CA. These are real cases. She was diagnosed with breast cancer shortly after gaining coverage through California's individual market. Her doctor told her she would have been dead, had she not been covered by her new plan. She had cared for her father 10 years prior to his death from Parkinson's disease. She didn't have access to employer-provided insurance and wasn't eligible for Medicaid at the time.

By the time the Affordable Care Act was implemented, she qualified for a plan through Covered California. She wrote: "Without the ACA, I would not be alive to write this post."

I wonder if that means anything to anyone on the Republican side of the aisle. No one comes forward; no one says what they would need. This is such a big issue. It affects every single one of us and every single one of our constituents.

Let me correct something. They also say: Well, ObamaCare is dead; it is imploding.

They say this to build support for repealing the law, but they are wrong. In California, which has worked hard to implement the law effectively, the marketplace to buy health coverage functions at a high level.

There are 1.5 million people signed up through the website Covered California. Enrollments have been stable, and there has been no uptick in healthy people leaving the insurance market.

The general consensus among experts is that the Federal healthcare market is not collapsing. Standard & Poor's said that "2016 results and the market enrollment so far in 2017 show that the ACA individual market is not in a 'death spiral.'" So, please, stop saying that.

In closing, I would like to just say to my Republican colleagues: Don't do this. Don't write a bill in secret. Don't take healthcare away from millions of people to cut taxes for the rich. Don't undermine protections for people with preexisting conditions. Don't allow insurers to go back to the days of selling junk plans. Don't end Medicaid. We have known it for so long. It is working. It is covering poor and elderly all across this country.

Those of us on this side of the aisle want to make the Affordable Care Act better. We want to work to improve our system. We stand ready to work together on behalf of our constituents, but if our colleagues continue down this path, we will fight this bill with all we have. The stakes are too high not to.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Brock Long, of North Carolina, to be Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 30 minutes of debate on the nomination, equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Madam President, I rise in strong support of William B. "Brock" Long as the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and I might add that supposedly, in 12 minutes, we were going to vote on his confirmation, and unfortunately because of this unbelievable weather throughout the country, we have Members who can't make it back in so this will roll until 11 a.m. tomorrow.

Brock is a fellow North Carolinian, alumnus of Appalachian State University, and currently lives with his family in Hickory, NC. I believe he is an exceptional nominee to lead FEMA, and he is well prepared to lead the Agency as it responds to disasters, regardless of where they are in this country.

When we met in my office a few weeks ago, we discussed the ongoing efforts in North Carolina to recover from Hurricane Matthew. Many might remember that. That was last year. It affected millions of people from Florida to Virginia. The storm caused historic flooding in cities and towns across the eastern half of my State. FEMA was in North Carolina before the storm, and Agency personnel have been in the State ever since that storm happened. As many in this Chamber know, once the camera crews leave, there is a perception by the American people the disaster is over. The truth is, Brock and I both know that isn't the case. Even 8 months after Matthew, there are still over 50 families being housed in local hotels utilizing FEMA assistance. It will take years for my State to fully recover.

Even as the recovery from Matthew continues, another hurricane season has already begun. If not a hurricane on the east coast, there will be fires, tornadoes, and other natural and man-made disasters that FEMA will be called to respond to. A key facet in re-

sponding to these disasters is the cooperation among local and State emergency management officials, as well as the Federal stakeholders led by FEMA.

Brock understands why this cooperation is imperative. He is bringing his own deep knowledge and experience of emergency management to FEMA. He began his career with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency before moving on to FEMA region IV in Atlanta. While at FEMA, Brock was a regional hurricane program manager and hurricane and evacuation liaison team leader.

After leaving FEMA, Brock was selected by my good friend Gov. Bob Riley of Alabama to serve as the director of Alabama's Emergency Management Agency. Brock served in that position from 2007 to 2011, where he led the State's efforts to respond to 14 disasters, including eight presidentially declared events. Specifically, Brock was charged with leading the State's response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2009.

He is a man of immense qualifications and experience. More recently, Brock has worked in the private sector, where he provided emergency management advice and expertise to his firm's clients. Brock has also served as the private sector chairman for the National Emergency Management Association. I believe we must take advantage of assets in and out of government when preparing for disasters. Leveraging the private sector can supplement State emergency management agencies with knowledge and expertise that is difficult to build independently when State budgets are tight. Brock agrees with this approach and will build on these important partnerships at FEMA.

The combination of his work for FEMA, State emergency management, and the private sector makes Brock Long well suited for this nomination by the President. Because of his experience, Brock understands it is the work done before a storm that saves lives. Helping States and cities establish emergency management plans allows funding and assistance to flow almost immediately after the storm has passed. If public officials are developing plans after the storm, it is already too late.

In closing, let me say to my colleagues again, reiterate my strong support for Brock Long, and urge my colleagues to vote for his confirmation—especially now that we have entered the 2017 hurricane season. It is my hope the Senate will confirm him tomorrow at 11 a.m. with broad bipartisan support, allowing him to quickly begin the work of strengthening FEMA and helping the Agency to respond to the disasters yet to happen.

I thank my colleagues.

I yield back the balance of my time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.